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FM AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2207
INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE
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RUCNIRA/IRAN COLLECTIVE
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 4747
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 2995
RHMFIUU/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC

UNCLAS ASHGABAT 000124

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN AND INL

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [TX](#)

SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: INL-FUNDED ENGLISH CLASS BRINGS
OFFICIALS OUT OF THEIR SHELLS

REF: ASHGABAT 097

¶1. Post's INL Officer (Poloff) dropped in for the latter portion of the INL-funded English Language Training (ELT) Center's thrice-weekly language course on January 23. A local EFL instructor teaches a group of 12 mid-level law enforcement officials from several Turkmen government ministries, including the State Counter Narcotics Service, Migration Service, Ministry of the Interior, and MFA. Another instructor also teaches a separate beginning course for officials three mornings a week. The ten-month course traditionally culminates in a UK study tour for three or four of the best performing students (Reftel).

¶2. The students were anxious to practice their English skills with Poloff, and after a series of introductions, asked a variety of questions on topics ranging from the U.S. presidential elections, Poloff's prior Foreign Service postings, and American versus British English usage. The class had a relaxed atmosphere, and the students were interested and engaged. When Poloff offered up a new colloquial expression, "TGIF," which was unfamiliar to all, including the instructor, the students commented that Fridays in Turkmenistan lack the same significance, saying, "We all have to work on Saturdays, and sometimes even on Sundays."

¶3. COMMENT: In a country where Embassy officers normally have limited contact with government officials, who tend to shy away from Embassy receptions and events, and where meetings can only be arranged via diplomatic note, the ELT courses offer a new avenue for interfacing with young Turkmen officials. Poloff plans to have similar meetings with the language students during the course of the program. END COMMENT.
MILES